

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ROME 005813

SIPDIS

FROM U.S. MISSION IN ROME

STATE PLEASE PASS TO PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR GADDI H. VASQUEZ  
STATE FOR A/S PRM DEWEY, IO A/S HOLMES AND GSALVATIERA  
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USAID FOR ADMINISTRATOR NATSIOS, AA/DCHA WINTER, DCHA/FFP  
USDA/FAS FOR U/S PENN, MCHAMBLISS, RTILSWORTH AND LREICH  
NSC FOR JWDORKEN  
USUN NEW YORK FOR CSERWER  
GAO FOR PTHOMAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: WFP PROPOSES PARTNERSHIP WITH U.S. PEACE CORPS -  
REQUEST FOR 1,000 VOLUNTEERS TO SUPPORT WORLD FOOD PROGRAM  
ACTIVITIES BY 2004

REF: (A) 01 ROME 5868, (B) 01 ROME 3755

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SUMMARY  
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1. WFP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JAMES MORRIS HAS REQUESTED UNITED STATES PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR GADDI H. VASQUEZ TO INVOLVE 1,000 PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS IN WORLD FOOD PROGRAM ACTIVITIES BY 2004. WFP IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HANDLING MORE THAN ONE THIRD OF GLOBAL FOOD AID FLOWS. THE UNITED STATES IS WFP'S LEADING DONOR, HAVING CONTRIBUTED USD 6.38 BILLION IN SUPPORT TO WFP OVER THE DECADE 1992-2001. WFP BELIEVES (AND THE USMISSION STRONGLY AGREES) THAT A STRENGTHENED PARTNERSHIP WITH PEACE CORPS WILL INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF FOOD AID WORLDWIDE AS WELL AS HELPING TO ENSURE THAT LONG-RANGE WFP WORK FORCE PLANNING PROVIDES EQUITABLE US REPRESENTATION. END SUMMARY.

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BACKGROUND  
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2. USMISSION RECEIVED COPY OF A LETTER FROM WFP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JAMES MORRIS TO UNITED STATES PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR GADDI H. VASQUEZ DATED NOVEMBER 15, 2002, WHICH PROPOSES A PARTNERSHIP TO INVOLVE 1,000 PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS IN WORLD FOOD PROGRAM ACTIVITIES WORLDWIDE BY 2004. AS PER REF A, WFP HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN EFFORTS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF AMERICANS WORKING IN THE UN-SYSTEM, PARTICULARLY WFP. IN PART THIS EFFORT FLOWS FROM A SENATOR HELMS COMMISSIONED GAO REPORT (JULY 2001) ENTITLED "UNITED NATIONS: TARGETED STRATEGIES COULD HELP BOOST US REPRESENTATION." WFP BELIEVES THAT A FORMAL ASSOCIATION WITH THE PEACE CORPS, IN ADDITION TO STRENGTHENING THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ITS FIELD OPERATIONS, CAN ALSO ADDRESS AMERICAN UNDER-REPRESENTATION BY OPENING AN ENTRY-LEVEL "WINDOW" FOR RECRUITMENT OF U.S. CITIZENS.

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TEXT OF LETTER FROM WFP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JAMES T. MORRIS TO UNITED STATES PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR GADDI H. VASQUEZ, DATED NOVEMBER 15, 2002  
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3. "DEAR MR. VASQUEZ: THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM (WFP) AND THE UNITED STATES PEACE CORPS HAVE MUCH IN COMMON. THE STRENGTH OF OUR COMMON INTERESTS LEADS ME TO PROPOSE THAT WE JOIN TOGETHER IN A BOLD NEW PARTNERSHIP TO INVOLVE 1,000 PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS IN WORLD FOOD PROGRAM ACTIVITIES BY 2004.

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BOTH OF OUR ORGANIZATIONS WORK TO BETTER THE LIVES OF THE POOREST PEOPLE IN THE POOREST COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD. WE ARE BOTH COMMITTED TO EDUCATION, MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH AND NUTRITION, ARRESTING THE DEVASTATING IMPACT OF HIV/AIDS, AND HELPING THOSE SUFFERING FROM NATURAL DISASTERS.

THE PEACE CORPS AND WFP ARE WORKING IN ABOUT 40 OF THE SAME COUNTRIES. OVER THE YEARS, WE HAVE ALREADY COLLABORATED (ALBEIT ON A RELATIVELY SMALL SCALE), WITH VOLUNTEERS WORKING IN WFP-ASSISTED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AS NEGOTIATED AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL, AND WITH CRISIS CORPS VOLUNTEERS WORKING ALONGSIDE WFP IN SOME RECENT EMERGENCIES. WFP HAS ALSO HIRED FORMER PEACE CORPS STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS AND EXCHANGED INFORMATION ON CROSS-CULTURAL AND SECURITY TRAINING FOR OUR PERSONNEL.

THERE IS ONE AREA IN PARTICULAR WHERE I THINK WE COULD HAVE A TREMENDOUS IMPACT BY WORKING MORE CLOSELY TOGETHER. TWO YEARS AGO, WITH ALMOST 40 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AND MUCH SUCCESS IN THE FIELD, WFP UNDERTOOK A GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR SCHOOL FEEDING.

THIS CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN SUPPORTED IN NO SMALL PART BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. FORMER U.S. SENATORS ROBERT DOLE AND GEORGE MCGOVERN DESERVE MUCH OF THE CREDIT FOR WHAT IS

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ACTION IO-00

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|      | CTME-00 | INL-00  | WHA-00  | SRPP-00 | EAP-00 | EB-00   | EUR-00  |
|      | OIGO-00 | E-00    | UTED-00 | FOE-00  | VC-00  | GAO-02  | H-01    |
|      | TEDE-00 | INR-00  | LAB-01  | VCE-00  | MMP-00 | DCP-01  | NSAE-00 |
|      | NSCE-00 | OES-00  | OIC-02  | OMB-01  | PC-01  | IRM-00  | STR-00  |
|      | TEST-00 | TRSE-00 | USIE-00 | FMP-00  | PRM-00 | DRL-02  | SAS-00  |

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P 031032Z DEC 02  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7157  
USDA FAS WASHDC PRIORITY 2452  
INFO EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE  
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
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USEU BRUSSELS 2983  
USMISSION GENEVA  
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NOW A SEVEN-YEAR CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORIZATION (IN THE NEW "FARM BILL") FOR ASSISTANCE TO INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL FEEDING AND MATERNAL AND CHILD NUTRITION. OTHER DONOR COUNTRIES ARE ALSO STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE. WE ARE VERY EXCITED ABOUT EXPANDING THIS EFFORT. IT CLEARLY REFLECTS PRESIDENT BUSH'S COMMITMENT THAT NO CHILD SHOULD BE LEFT BEHIND. OUR COLLECTIVE FUTURE RESTS ON ENSURING SOUND NUTRITION AND EDUCATION FOR ALL OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN.

WFP WAS ABLE TO INCREASE OUR SCHOOL FEEDING PORTFOLIO FROM THE 1999 LEVEL OF 11.9 MILLION SCHOOLCHILDREN BENEFITING IN 53 COUNTRIES, TO OVER 15 MILLION BENEFICIARY CHILDREN IN 57 COUNTRIES IN 2001. WE NOW HAVE SCHOOL FEEDING OPERATIONS IN 61 COUNTRIES.

WITH OUR STRONG EXPERIENCE IN THESE PROGRAMS, WE HAVE LEARNED THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERS--AT INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND AT THE LOCAL LEVELS. AMONG OUR BEST PARTNERS HAVE BEEN USAID, USDA AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT -- THE US NOW  
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CONTRIBUTES MORE THAN USD 1 BILLION ANNUALLY, 60 PERCENT OF OUR FUNDING, AND WE HAVE WORKED VERY CLOSELY WITH SENIOR OFFICIALS IN THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND OTHER TROUBLE SPOTS.

IN PROPOSING A MUCH-EXPANDED COLLABORATION WITH THE PEACE CORPS, WE ARE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN YOUR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION EXPERTISE. VOLUNTEERS PLACED IN WFP-ASSISTED SCHOOLS OR SCHOOL DISTRICTS, WFP-ASSISTED MATERNAL/CHILD HEALTH CLINICS, ETC., WOULD STRENGTHEN THE PROGRAM AND HELP ENSURE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT.

WE HAVE FOLLOWED WITH GREAT INTEREST A NUMBER OF NEW INITIATIVES INVOLVING THE PEACE CORPS:

-CONGRESSIONAL DISCUSSIONS REGARDING INCREASING THE NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS WORLDWIDE AND THE PEACE CORPS CHARTER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ACT;  
-THE PEACE CORPS COMMITMENT TO ENSURE THAT EVERY ONE OF THE VOLUNTEERS SERVING IN AFRICA ARE PREPARED TO WORK KNOWLEDGEABLY TO PREVENT AIDS;  
-THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CRISIS CORPS; AND  
-THE PEACE CORPS' ATTEMPTS TO PROTECT VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF WORKING IN DANGEROUS SITUATIONS.

I AM CONFIDENT A SIGNIFICANT EXPANSION OF COLLABORATION WOULD BENEFIT BOTH OUR ORGANIZATIONS AND THE BENEFICIARIES WE SERVE. IF YOU AGREE, WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO CONSIDER WORKING TOWARD THE GOAL OF HAVING 1,000 PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS AT WORK IN WFP-ASSISTED ACTIVITIES BY 2004. I KNOW THAT SOUNDS AMBITIOUS, BUT FROM ALL WE HAVE HEARD ABOUT  
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YOUR LEADERSHIP, IT IS NOT BEYOND THE PEACE CORPS' REACH. MIGHT I SUGGEST THAT WE BEGIN TO LOOK AT A STRATEGY OF JOINTLY APPROACHING GOVERNMENTS IN MOST OR ALL OF THE 40 COUNTRIES WHERE WE BOTH CURRENTLY HAVE A PRESENCE.

I HOPE YOU WILL SHARE MY ENTHUSIASM FOR PUTTING TALENTED YOUNG AMERICANS TO WORK ON FOOD AID INITIATIVES THAT WILL HELP THE WORLD'S POOR. IT WOULD BE A PLEASURE TO MEET WITH YOU IN PERSON OR OVER THE PHONE AT YOUR CONVENIENCE TO DISCUSS THIS INITIATIVE. I WILL BE IN WASHINGTON ON DECEMBER 3-5 AND I HOPE YOU WILL HAVE SOME TIME FOR US TO TALK. FOR MORE DETAILS ON OUR PROPOSAL, YOUR STAFF COULD CONTACT JOE SCALISE AT OUR LIAISON OFFICE IN WASHINGTON (202-653-2618) AND ARLENE MITCHELL (FORMER PEACE CORPS) ON SCHOOL FEEDING (011-3906-6513-2534).

I SINCERELY APPRECIATE YOUR CONSIDERING OUR PROPOSAL AND VERY MUCH LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING YOU. THERE IS VAST SCOPE FOR OUR WORKING TOGETHER AS PARTNERS. SINCERELY, JAMES MORRIS." END TEXT OF WFP LETTER.

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COMMENT  
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14. WFP IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HANDLING MORE THAN ONE THIRD OF

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